



Committee Report

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	September 22, 2022
Subject / Report No:	CCR-CW-09-22
Title:	Inaugural Considerations
Prepared by:	Tara Warder
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	None
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That report CCR-CW-09-22 regarding inaugural considerations be received; and
2. That section 3.1 – Date of Inaugural Session of the County’s Procedural By-law 5134-22 be waived for the purposes of the election of the 2022-2023 Warden; and
3. That the Inaugural meeting of the 2022-2026 Council be held and livestreamed at 11:00 AM Tuesday December 6, 2022, as an in-person event only, and without the option of electronic voting.

Executive Summary

The County’s procedural by-law governs the calling, place and proceedings of meetings, including the inaugural meeting for the purposes of electing the Warden each year. The report proposes a change to the time the inaugural meeting is held for the election of the 2022-2023 Warden and explains the rationale for holding the event in person only.

Background and Discussion

Section 3.1 of the County’s Procedural By-law states that “Council will, in accordance with the By-law, hold its first meeting on the first Tuesday in December at 7:30 PM.” The Warden is elected annually at this meeting. The Inaugural meeting for the 2022-2026 Council term is scheduled for December 6, 2022.

Since December 2020, the time and format of inaugural meetings have differed compared to what has historically taken place and what is outlined in the procedural by-law. The last two years staff have recommended waiving certain sections of the by-law for the inaugural session to hold the meeting in the most appropriate format depending on the circumstances of the pandemic.

Though the same restrictions around room capacities and social gatherings are not anticipated this year, there were benefits to the change in format and time from 7:30 PM to a daytime meeting. Staff are therefore recommending that this year's Inaugural session of County Council be held at 11:00 am on Tuesday, December 6, 2022 followed by a lunch at the Administration building to celebrate the election of the Warden. This change in time requires two thirds support from County Council to waive the subject section of the procedural bylaw.

Concerns have been raised in the past two years about holding the inaugural meeting during the day. Staff appreciate this can conflict with employment obligations of councillors and understand it is also difficult to make this decision for an incoming council. Benefits of switching the meeting to a daytime event include savings in cost and time related to the planning of the event.

Nominations and Voting

Recent changes to the procedural by-law in 2022 incorporated a deadline to submit nominations for Warden. Nominations for Warden will be accepted until noon 7 days prior to the inaugural meeting.

The procedural by-law also permits members to attend Council meetings either in person or through electronic means, including the inaugural meeting. Though a hybrid meeting is permitted according to the by-law, this format is not recommended for the inaugural session because the secrecy of members' votes cannot be achieved in a hybrid setup. The election of the Warden by secret ballot is permitted under the Municipal Act, and the procedural by-law states that the election will be held this this manner.

Staff recommend that the inaugural meeting be held in person only, with voting to take place by paper ballot in order to maintain the intent of the secret ballot.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The Inaugural session of Council follows the County's Procedural By-law 5134-22. Section 2.1 permits the suspension of any of the provisions of this by-law with a two-thirds vote of Council. The proposed motion noted in this report will require such a vote as it waives the section of the By-law speaking to the time the inaugural meeting will be held. Section 233 (5) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, allows that the head of council may be appointed by secret ballot. Section 233 (1) of the Municipal Act requires that the Head of Council be selected at the first meeting, which is scheduled for December 6, 2022.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no additional financial costs associated with the recommended changes to the Inaugural meeting beyond what is included in the budget. Any expenses related to holding a Council lunch following the meeting would be covered through the existing Council operating budget.

Relevant Consultation

Internal CAO

External

Appendices and Attachments

None